

Unit 19: Research Project (Pearson Set)

Unit code	H/618/5060
Unit type	Core
Unit level	5
Credit value	30

Introduction

Research skills are as vital for the workplace as they are for academic development. Research skills enable students to identify a problem, collect informational resources that can help address the problem, evaluate the resources for quality and relevance, and come up with an effective solution to the problem. These are seen as essential skills by employers for most positions in industry, to support a range of duties, for example report writing, building a business case, business planning, launching a new product or service.

This is a Pearson-set unit. Students will choose their own project based on a theme provided by Pearson (this will change annually). The project must be related to their specialist pathway of study (unless they are studying the general business pathway). This will enable students to explore and examine a relevant and current topical aspect of business in the context of the business environment and their chosen specialist pathway.

The aim of this unit is to offer students the opportunity to engage in sustained research in a specific field of study. The unit enables students to demonstrate the capacity and ability to identify a research theme, to develop a research aim and objectives and to present the outcomes of such research in both written and verbal formats. The unit also encourages students to reflect on their engagement in the research process, during which recommendations for future, personal development are key learning points.

***Please refer to the accompanying *Pearson-set Assignment Guide and Theme Release* document for further support and guidance on the delivery of the Pearson-set unit.**

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit a student will be able to:

- LO1 Examine appropriate research methodologies and methods to identify those appropriate to the research process
- LO2 Develop a research proposal, including a supporting literature review
- LO3 Analyse data using appropriate techniques to communicate research findings
- LO4 Reflect on the application of research methodologies and process.

Essential Content

LO1 Examine appropriate research methodologies and methods to identify those appropriate to the research process

The research process:

The distinct phases of research, including research aims and objectives, methodology, literature review, methods, analysis and presentation of findings.

The use of secondary data to inform primary data collection.

Explorative, descriptive and causal research approaches.

Research methodologies and methods:

Different research methodologies underpinning a philosophical approach: positivism (deductive) vs interpretivism (inductive) paradigms.

Conceptual framework of ideas, philosophies, approaches and concepts to conduct research.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Mixed method approaches, including limitations and advantages.

Associated tools and techniques, e.g. focus groups, in-depth surveys, questionnaires.

Ethics, reliability and validity:

Role and significance of ethics in conducting research, e.g. informed consent, confidentiality.

Reliability of research and degree to which research methods produce consistent results.

Validity of research to extend to which results measure what they are supposed to measure.

LO2 **Develop a research proposal, including a supporting literature review**

Developing a research proposal:

Developing a methodical and valid proposal as the foundation for a research project.

Purpose and significance of the research question/hypothesis.

Clarity on the research aim and supporting objectives, and how these may change as the research process unfolds.

Application of research methods and ethical considerations that need to be addressed in conducting the research.

Literature review:

The purpose of the literature review, e.g. to explore, summarise, compare and critically analyse what other researchers have written about the research topic.

Adopting a 'funnel' approach, balancing focus and depth.

Positioning a research project in context of existing knowledge. Identification of relevant schools of thought and/or seminal research works.

Potential to open up new gaps in knowledge or levels of awareness.

LO3 **Analyse data using appropriate techniques to communicate research findings**

Primary data collection and sampling:

The significance of gathering primary data, qualitative or quantitative, to support research analysis.

Characteristics of primary data.

Selecting sample types and sizes relevant to the research.

Alternative random and non-random probability sampling approaches.

Different digital tools for data gathering, e.g. SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, SurveyGizmo.

Analysing data:

Quantitative data: validation, editing, coding and analysis.

Qualitative data: data preparation and analysis of content, narrative and discourse approaches.

Communicating research outcomes:

Alternative methods of communicating outcomes persuasively and logically.

Recognising methods, e.g. spoken word and medium, e.g. presentation.

The influences of research and intended audience.

Use of frequency tables, simple tables, pie charts, histograms, frequency curves and normal curve.

Advantages and disadvantages of different methods.

Software for analysing and presentation of quantitative data, e.g. Excel, SPSS.

LO4 Reflect on the application of research methodologies and process.

Reflection for learning and practice:

Difference between reflecting on performance and evaluating a research project including the research process, the quality of the research argument and use of evidence.

Reflection on the merits, limitations and potential pitfalls of chosen methods.

The cycle of reflection:

Critical and objective self-reflection to inform personal development along the research journey.

Reflection in action and reflection on action.

Using self-reflection to inform and develop future behaviours, considerations and actions.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Pass	Merit	Distinction
LO1 Examine appropriate research methodologies and methods to identify those appropriate to the research process		LO1 and LO2 D1 Justify chosen research methodologies and processes supported by a credible academically underpinned literature review.
P1 Examine alternative research methodologies. P2 Explore alternative methods and tools used for the collection of research data that consider costs, ethics and access.	M1 Evaluate alternative research methodologies and data collection methods and justify choices made based on philosophical/theoretical frameworks.	
LO2 Develop a research proposal, including a supporting literature review		
P3 Produce a research proposal, including a defined aim and objectives supported by a literature review.	M2 Evaluate the merits, limitations and pitfalls of approaches to data collection in compiling the research proposal.	
LO3 Analyse data using appropriate techniques to communicate research findings		D2 Communicate to the intended audience the research findings and outcomes, including justified recommendations.
P4 Conduct research using appropriate methods for a business research project. P5 Analyse data from research findings to communicate research outcomes in an appropriate manner for the intended audience.	M3 Present the analysis of data utilising appropriate analytical techniques, charts and tables to meet the research aim and communicate outcomes.	
LO4 Reflect on the application of research methodologies and process.		D3 Demonstrate critical self-reflection and insight that results in recommended actions for improvements to inform future research.
P6 Reflect on the effectiveness of research methods applied in meeting objectives of the business research project. P7 Consider alternative research methodologies and lessons learnt in view of outcomes.	M4 Demonstrate self-reflection and engagement in the research project process, leading to recommended actions for future improvement.	

Recommended Resources

Textbooks

FLICK, U. (2020) *Introducing Research Methodology: A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. 3rd Ed. London: SAGE.

GRAY, D. (2017) *Doing Research in the Real World*. 4th Ed. London: SAGE.

SAUNDERS, M., LEWIS, P. and THORNHILL, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 6th Ed. Harlow: Pearson.

Websites

www.learnhigher.ac.uk

Learn Higher
Research Skills
(Teaching resources)

www.skillsyouneed.com

Skills You Need
Learning Skills
How to Write a Dissertation or Thesis
(General reference)

Links

This unit links to the following related unit:

Unit 6: Managing a Successful Business Project (Pearson Set)